

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Figures 2 and 22 have been amended and new Figures 40, 41 and 42 have been added, as shown in the attached four (4) sheets of Replacement Drawing Sheets and Annotated Replacement Drawing Sheets.

REMARKS

The present filing is responsive to the Examiner's concerns noted in the Office Action.

Examiner Interview

Applicant appreciates the courtesy of a further telephonic interview with the Examiner on July 11, 2007. At the interview, the issue raised by the Examiner in paragraph 1 of the present Office Action, with respect to the previously added limitations (relating to the extension of the sleeve beyond an end of the ferrule) not being shown in Figures 22 and 23 were discussed. In particular, Applicant noted that in light of the entire specification, including written description and all drawings (other than Figures 22 and 23), support the previously added limitation.

The Examiner suggested adding a new figure showing a sectional view of such structure, and pointing to the relevant sections in the specification, to more clearly support the recited structure. Applicant has done so as elaborated below.

The Examiner preliminarily indicated that with the consideration of the previously added limitation, the pending claims would distinguish over all the prior art of record, subject to further searching and consideration.

Summary of the Response

Figures 2 and 22 have been amended, and new Figures 40, 41 and 42 have been added. No claim has been amended. Claims 1-95 and 105 have been previously canceled. Claims 99-102, 114, 117-129 and 135 have been previously withdrawn. Claims 96-104, 106-145 remain

pending in the present application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application as amended are respectfully requested.

Drawing Changes

Figures 2 and 22 have been amended to include indication of sectional views across the axial direction of the coupling of sleeve and two ferrules. New Figures 40, 41 and 42 show such sectional views.

Support for the foregoing drawing changes is found in the specification, for example as follows:

- a. Figure 23 is an exploded view of the assembly shown in Figure 22 (see, page 18 of the specification, lines 29 to 30). Original Figure 23 illustrates two ferrules (920 and 930), each supporting multiple fibers (914 and 915), and a complementary sleeve (910), which when slidably received the ferrules (as shown in Figure 22), would extend beyond an end with respect to either of the ferrules (i.e., at the mating surfaces of the two ferrules; as shown in new Figure 41). Such extension of the sleeve enables coupling to a connection device (as claimed in claim 96, for example), such as another ferrule as shown in Figure 23.

Corresponding written descriptions relating to Figures 22 and 23 appear at page 18 of the specification, beginning at lines 27+. Figure 41 is a consistent representation of the sectional view across the axis of the assembly shown in Figure 22.

- b. Similarly, Figure 3 is an exploded view of the assembly shown in Figure 2. Original Figure 3 illustrates two ferrules (130 and 140), each supporting a fiber (110 and 120), and a complementary sleeve (150), which when slidably received the ferrules (as shown in Figure 2), would extend beyond an end with respect to either one of the ferrules (i.e., at the mating surfaces of the two ferrules; as shown in new Figure 40). Such extension beyond the end of the ferrules is more clearly shown in new Figure 42, in which the ferrule (140) is omitted from view. The sleeve (150) extends beyond the end of the ferrule (130). Such extension of the sleeve enables coupling to a connection device (as claimed in claim 96, for example), such as another ferrule (140) as shown in Figure 2. Applicant notes that Figure 2 also shows the mating surface of the two ferrules 130 and 140, though the split (270) in the split sleeve 150, at about the center of the longitudinal section. Corresponding written descriptions relating to Figures 2 and 3 appear at page 10 of the specification, beginning at lines 19+. Figures 40 and 42 are consistent representation of the noted sectional views across the axis of the assembly shown in Figure 2.

Applicant respectfully submits that the changes to the drawings do not add any new matter to the original disclosure.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Replacement Drawing Sheets (4 sheets)
Annotated Replacement Drawing Sheets (4 sheets)